



**Meeting Minutes**

**HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD (HAB, Board)**

**Full Board Meeting**

*January 19, 2022*

*Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams*

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<p><i>This is only a summary of issues and actions discussed at this meeting. It may not represent the fullness of represented ideas or opinions, and it should not be used as a substitute for actual public involvement or public comment on any particular topic unless specifically identified as such.</i></p>
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## **Opening**

Ruth Nicholson, HAB Facilitator, welcomed meeting participants and notified the participants that the meeting was being recorded.

Stan Branch, US Department of Energy (DOE), announced that this meeting was being held in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACE). He stated that the HAB's role was to provide policy-level advice and recommendations regarding DOE Environmental Management (DOE-EM) site-specific issues.

Steve Wiegman, Public at Large and HAB Chair, welcomed participants and provided opening statements. He provided an overview of the meeting ground rules, asking members to remain respectful of those presenting and one another. Ruth provided a review of the meeting agenda.

## **Department of Energy Membership Packet Update**

Carrie Meyer, DOE, introduced herself at stated that she was there to talk about HAB member recruitment and the HAB membership packet. Specifically, she would review the [HAB's Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) provisions and the department's diversity objectives, which the HAB would use to recruit for seats.

She explained that the MOU was an agreement between DOE, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) for the structure and operation of the HAB, based on the [HAB convening report](#).

She stated that the MOU outlined the seats represented on the Board, including mention of public interest seats, tribal seats, and labor related seats. She explained that the first category consisted of "intergovernmental organizations," which were specifically named and include:

- Benton County
- Franklin and Grant Counties (combined)
- Cities of Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, West Richland (separate seats for each city)
- Benton-Franklin Council of Governments
- Tri-Cities Development Council (TRIDEC)
- Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council
- Central Washington Building and Construction Trades Council
- Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Indian Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Governor of Oregon/Oregon state agency that has the lead role for Hanford Cleanup Issues
- Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board

The MOU also contains a category of "specific interest groups," consisting of:

- Hanford workforce
- Local environmental interests
- Regional citizen, environmental and public interest organizations with an active interest in Hanford cleanup issues
- Local/regional public health concerns
- Regional universities
- Public at large

Carrie invited for questions regarding the MOU.

Bob Suyama, Benton County, asked when the current version of the MOU was signed. Carrie confirmed that it was last signed 2008 and would need to be updated to account for recently added public at large seats. Bob noted that the HAB Process Manual would need to be updated as well, likely in conjunction with the MOU, as each would need DOE Headquarters (DOE-HQ) approval.

Continuing the discussion, Carrie stated that over the previous 18 months DOE expressed the importance of inclusion and increasing the diversity of its advisory boards, which was a driving factor in adding additional public-at-large seats in the previous HAB membership package. Further, the HAB was an important organization to DOE's public engagement and outreach, as the Board assisted in helping maintain public awareness of the site, the cleanup mission, and progress by keeping community stakeholders informed and providing those stakeholders a voice in the mission by bringing their voices to the DOE.

She stated that the HAB was chartered under FACA and was part of the Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EMSSAB), along with seven other boards nationwide. Each board was intended to draw upon and provide the diverse viewpoints of the affected community to provide policy level advice to DOE, or in the HAB's case, the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies. She stated that the Biden Administration recently issued an executive order that focused on promoting diversity, inclusivity, and public participation across the administration's federal missions. DOE was making an effort to ensure that HAB member term limits were applied consistently with the EMSSAB Charter, as applied to other Site-Specific Advisory Boards (SSAB), to ensure that term limit exceptions were not hindering those goals.

Carrie explained that under the HAB there were 37 seats, which included 15 MOU-designated intergovernmental organizations, 12 interest-specific seats, and ten public-at-large seats. The intergovernmental organizations had a standing seat on the HAB and would be able to keep requesting term limit exceptions without going through the same recruitment process for new representatives. Exception requests could be granted by the Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management (EM) but were not guaranteed. For interest-specific and public-at-large seats, the local DOE office could request a term limit exception only after a thorough recruitment effort was undertaken for new applicants, assuming no new viable candidates were identified. The exception process for those seats would require submission of documentation outlining those recruitment efforts. Still, these exception requests would not be guaranteed. She noted that the recruitment efforts would not be limited to the organizations holding those seats, as new organizations could also apply for those seats.

She stated that DOE appreciated the longstanding service of the HAB and its members and continued to benefit from their experience and expertise. DOE was remaining engaged with the other TPA agencies, EPA and Ecology, on the matter. She reiterated that the focus of the changes was to position the HAB to represent a diverse set of views and perspectives necessary to deliver well-informed and actionable policy-level advice.

Carrie introduced Kelly Snyder, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for DOE, who would assist her in answering questions. Kelly stated that she also appreciated the HAB and the work it has done throughout the years and that she hoped to continue the positive relationship with the Hanford community.

### *Regulatory Perspective*

David Bowen, Ecology, stated that he was presently listening to the conversation, as he was only recently informed of the term limits decision and did not have the time to "run it through the agency." He noted that his statements would be entirely from his personal perspective as a result. He stated that in his role at

Ecology, he was working toward recruiting and training the next generation of regulators. In examining the portion of the MOU that discussed term limits along with the convening report, he felt that those had the same goal: to ensure that the HAB was bringing new people in and teaching them about Hanford, as well as bringing in new perspectives.

He stated that he was pleased to learn, through a letter routed to him through the Governor's office, that there would be exceptions granted, even if there was a more onerous process required to get them. He did not want the HAB to lose its institutional knowledge, as that was a concern to him. He stated that HAB members bring a "vast swath" of knowledge; he hoped to keep those members engaged and tap into that historical knowledge. He was interested to know if HAB members that reach a term limit would be able to return after another member's term.

David stated that he looked at the HAB as an important "cog" that deserved the same respect granted to the executive leadership community. He noted that agendas for HAB meetings used to be provided early, which no longer seemed to be the norm. He hoped to return to that practice, especially for important conversations.

Dave Einan, EPA, stated that he would also start off mostly by listening and learning. He stated that the Board was important to him, as well as the agencies, as a means to hear diverse perspectives in the advice received. Additionally, the reverse was true: the TPA agencies relied on the HAB to relay the information received back to its constituencies. He stated that EPA did not have an official position yet and would work on that.

Carrie thanked David and Dave for their input. She stated that she had been discussing the matter with those two as she was hearing possibilities and that final determination on the matter was only received the end of the week before, and as a result, was not well communicated. She stated that she would remain engaged with Ecology and EPA to work together as a team going forward.

### *Board Questions*

Susan Leckband, Washington League of Women Voters, stated that DOE's statements were upsetting and disconcerting. For longtime HAB members, it felt like DOE wanted to get rid of institutional knowledge, some of which went back further than many DOE employees. Regarding Hanford cleanup, she understood the nervousness and struggle that DOE faced, but the decision DOE was bringing forward felt very political. She stated that there was no question that the Board already presented an extraordinary diversity of opinion, which, by her understanding, was an EMSSAB requirement. She stated that representatives chosen for each of the organizations on the Board represent incredibly diverse groups of people within those organizations, which spoke well for the over 300 pieces of advice done by consensus while working through issues as diverse as those represented on the Board.

She was concerned that the decision was more of a political move than a true attempt to bring in additional diversity. She stated that she understood that DOE operated in a political realm, but there needed to be careful implementation of its goals as the proposed implementation.

It felt to her more like an attempt to get rid of some individuals or organizations that did not agree with DOE rather than an effort to utilize the Board's value in presentation of the real opinions of the citizens of the affected communities. She recognized that the Board had worked through the pandemic and appreciated the effort by each of the TPA agencies to allow the Board to continue to meet but stated that the Board also struggled to get the level of information needed to provide informed advice in that timeframe. She stated that the Board struggled with the inability to get the level of detailed information

required to work through the “sausage making process” to develop the informed policy-level advice that it has been told the agencies are seeking.

Susan asked that DOE strongly consider the effects of the rules it was proposing. She asked what the “real genesis” of the proposed changes were.

Kelly started with a question posed by David Bowen. She stated that Board members would be granted a total term of six years, regardless of the seat it was served in, primary or alternate. She noted that SSABs were open to the public, so members would still be able to participate after their terms were over. She stated that, in addition to contributing through formal comment periods, the public was able to participate in subcommittees per FACA, which had been the case in her 20 years of working with FACA boards.

In response to Susan, Kelly explained that the diversity DOE was trying to obtain was larger than just interest, and the HAB would be held to the same standard as other advisory boards. Kelly stated that DOE was not just targeting one specific category with interest and discussed some of the metrics they would target. For gender, DOE was targeting at least 40% for male and 40% for female. She stated that DOE was also trying to gain diversity in the education levels of the Board members, with at least 25% holding master’s degrees or above, 25% bachelor’s degrees, and 25% with either a GED, high school diploma, or associates degree. DOE also had targets for age demographics, hoping to gain 20% membership under the age of 30. DOE had worked towards meeting those goals in the past but was now taking steps to formalize the goals.

Kelly pointed out that the 15 organizations specifically named in the MOU were not being changed, and as a result, would not be asked for the same extensive recruitment documentation that the other interest groups would be required to submit. She also noted that interest seats did not belong to specific organizations; she understood that the same groups were consistently granted those seats, but they were not guaranteed those seats per the MOU. However, those groups were still able and encouraged to nominate members.

Kelly stated that DOE needed to adhere to Executive Order 14035, and as a result, FACA boards needed to diversify. That was the driving factor. DOE needed to document the efforts to achieve those goals and ensure that the opportunity to join advisory boards was open to everyone. She wanted to be clear that DOE was not trying to limit participation; the new rules were intended for to increase public participation.

Laurene Contreras, Yakama Nation, asked if, as the designated member for her organization, if she would continue to be appointed after six years or if she would be granted an exception, as someone participating in a long-term program. Kelly stated that, if Laurene was appointed to represent one of the 15 MOU-designated organizations, DOE would still require an exception request to comply with the set requirements. However, those seats would not be subject to the requirement for extensive recruitment documentation. Kelly stated that it was important for those 15 organizations to determine who would represent them.

Mike Korenko, Grant and Franklin Counties, noted that the Board had been putting a lot of attention toward diversity for several years and thought the Board had a strong diversity record. He stated that he fell into the category of members that had been appointed for longer than six years and wondered if he needed to resign or what protocol needed to be followed for members exceeding the six-year limit. He felt that the stated categories for diversity did not account for diversity of experience. He explained that he had over 30 years of experience in the DOE complex and felt that those with a depth of experience also brought value to DOE. Furthermore, HAB members volunteered a lot of time and energy for DOE’s benefit. He felt that the new rules were an attempt to get rid of some members and did not understand

how a six-year term limit could link to increased diversity. He noted that the HAB had previous discussions and brainstorming sessions on how to increase diversity and, in his opinion, that DOE's proposal seemed destructive.

Kelly responded, stating the six-year term limit was not a new policy as it had been a part of the charter for decades. DOE was asking for additional documentation to ensure that it understood what was being done for the communities to be able to participate as part of its advisory boards. All DOE advisory boards were being held to the same standard. She understood that the HAB operated under an MOU and needed to ensure that rules were consistent with that MOU. She stated that she heard concerns from members of other advisory boards that the HAB was treated differently. Those concerns, along with the executive order, were among multiple driving factors.

Carrie continued to address Mike's questions. She reiterated that members representing a named entity in the MOU could be granted an exception, should that organization want to nominate the member to serve again. She stated that when she began having the discussion of diversity with the HAB in November of 2020, one of the things discussed were the community demographics in comparison to the HAB's. Though improvements were made toward matching the two, they were not close enough. Prior to the previous membership package, there was no Hispanic representation and too few females.

Carrie stated that, to increase participation, the HAB may need to make operational changes as well. As an example, midday meetings were not conducive to the working class, as they could not be expected to take vacation for HAB meetings. That was problem impeding the ability to recruit the next generation of HAB members. Additionally, DOE and the HAB would need to work on recruitment methods for the demographic areas where they were weak. Regarding Board members with technical expertise, Carrie stated that was great to have, but the HAB's advice should not be focused on technical solutions; it should be focused on policy. DOE was specifically trying not to get engage in a deep level of technical discussion, as it could be exclusionary to those not technical by trade. DOE tried to balance providing the HAB enough detail to provide actionable, policy level advice, but not so much detail that many members of the group are unable to participate. Conversely, she stated that the Board needed to be open to the information DOE provided, as there were many instances over the last year where DOE provided briefing after briefing, but the HAB kept stating it was not enough. She did not feel that was constructive.

David Bowen was curious if there had been success in recruiting 20- to 30-year-olds for other SSABs. Additionally, he was curious if there were mechanisms in place for attracting working folks. Kelly stated that there was success in those areas, and there had been an increase in representation for those under 30 and with a high school education. The sites were finding creative ways to recruit, such as engaging with high schools, universities, and union halls. She recognized the difficulty in engaging those groups, which was why DOE wanted exceptions as an option, rather than not filling a seat altogether. She stated that those changes would be implemented for all boards and that the HAB's membership package, expected in the following months, needed to be in line with those changes.

Bob Suyama, Benton County, asked about the processes to determine which organizations would be granted interest seats. As an example, if there was a specific interest organization that had been serving for many years, but another organization applied for that same seat, who would make the determination in granting the seat? Kelly stated that the local DOE entity would make that determination and submit the package to DOE-HQ for appointment. By her understanding, in the case of Hanford, the TPA agencies collectively discussed nominees to be submitted. Carrie noted that it was rare to have competing requests, but it would be a good problem to have. In the previous package, DOE chose to keep a public-at-large seat vacant because it allowed the Board to achieve the diversity balance DOE wanted.

Bob provided a follow up question: If the MOU were to be updated to add the new Public at Large seats, would there also be an opportunity to define the process DOE planned to use for approval? He recommended having a written, defensible process. Additionally, he noted that he previously heard that it took approximately 23 steps for approval to be granted for member appointments. He wanted to learn what those steps consisted of for a better big-picture understanding of the process.

Kelley stated that there were not 23 official approvals, but the steps were numerous and different for each site. Some only required a site manager approval at the local level before submission to DOE-HQ, while others required more. She explained that approvals started at the local DOE management level, then were sent to DOE-HQ, where it would route through her, then up to EM-4, EM-3, EM-2, EM-1, then the Office of Boards and Council, the White House liaison, general counsel, and the community management office. Within each of those different offices, there can be one to two approvers before it reaches the Secretary of Energy for final approval. From there, it's routed back down to EM-1 or EM-2's office for an approval letter signing. Local procedures were in place to determine how each site developed its draft membership packages.

Carrie provided additional information on the local review process. She stated that she participated in that review along with the other TPA agency Public Information Officers (PIOs), including Ryan Miller at Ecology and Roberto Armijo at EPA. She was not certain if they shared that information with David Bowen and Dave Einan, but within DOE, Carrie would share that information with Brian Stickney and Brian Vance before submission to DOE-HQ.

Tom Galioto, TRIDEC, stated that the HAB, along with the other SSABs, recently sent statements regarding the impacts of membership approval delays. He asked what DOE's impression of those statements were, if reviewed. Kelly stated that the letter had not been submitted to DOE-HQ yet, but she had seen the letter and recognized that those impacts were real. It was important to DOE that the boards were fully populated and represented their communities. She was passionate about that and consistently pushing for solutions to the long approval process. She stated that she was working on things "behind the scenes" to avoid lapses in membership going forward.

Tom Galioto asked what initiatives were being proposed to streamline that process in the future. Based on a recent EMSSAB chairs' meeting, he had ideas that could support the process. Kelly provided some context, noting that though her career she gained experience from the perspective of a site-level Deputy Designated Federal Officer (DDFO) and federal coordinator and as DFO for the EMSSAB. This perspective provided her a strong understanding of membership packages at both levels, from recruitment through approval. Through the current process, applicants can go six to nine months without being told the status of their applications or appointments. Understanding that advisory board participation was a volunteer effort, she was working to close that gap. One means of doing so was to establish pre-approval check with senior management to learn about membership concerns early, allowing those to be addressed before membership package development. This process saved a lot of time in the long run. By getting concerns communicated early, it prevented issues from occurring deep into the approval process and allowed membership packages to be turned around more quickly where it was implemented.

Rob Davis, City of Pasco, stated that he did not feel that the Board had a problem with diversity in the past. He agreed that the HAB did not conform to the other SSABs, and that was because the Hanford Site had more waste than any other site in the complex. He did not feel that the technical expertise of the Board was being appreciated, as it should be, as many of Hanford's problems were technical in nature. He stated that the HAB has issued more advice than any other board out there, and that the advice was thoughtful and utilized value statements. He felt that the problem being addressed was not one that was

there from the beginning and that DOE was not creating additional problems for the rest of the board. He stated that many of the Boards' members volunteered their service, including himself. That volunteer service was unpaid, with many members taking vacation for Board meetings every three to four months.

He felt that the relatively simple procedures that the Board operated under were not being made overly complex. Under DOE's proposed rules, he stated, considerable man hours requirements would be imposed on organizations to document their activities and justify their decisions. He expected that would be an undue burden on the organizations' administrative staff to serve as part of a completely volunteer organization. He felt that DOE was intentionally causing the organizations to expend more resources just to complete the same work.

Furthermore, Rob did not feel that personnel in Washington DC really understood the challenges of the Hanford Site, noting that some people still believed that there were stainless-steel waste vessels on site, as opposed to the corroding carbon steel waste tanks in place. He felt that the HAB's advice was valuable, and so far, the HAB had added value towards solving the site's technical problems. He expected that, in many cases, some Board members knew more than the presenters on topics. He felt that DOE-HQ did not understand that experience mattered at Hanford.

Rob stated that, if DOE was going to increase that burden on members and organizations, it would need to start giving stipends. He thought that DOE's efforts in recruiting at colleges and universities was clever, but those individuals were still effectively being paid in credit. In many cases, Rob felt, as soon as those students got their degrees, they would quit the boards. His point, he explained, was that DOE was supposed to make it easy for the members and organizations to participate and invite their opinions. He did not see the need for change and expected other members felt the same. He stated that he cared tremendously about the Hanford Site and had invested much of his life to that site and other nuclear facilities across the county. Though Rob had additional points to cover, he stopped there at the Chair's request.

Kelly responded to Rob's stipend statement, stating that none of the SSAB members receive a stipend, though they do get travel reimbursement. DOE did not pay members to participate.

Max Woods, Oregon Department of Energy, stated that he had a specific "nuts and bolts" question. He wanted to know if there was an outlined criteria for the recruitment process that was needed to justify Board appointments. If there was not, Max recommended assembling that. Kelly stated that there was not a specific list of criteria at DOE-HQ, as each community was unique. Local site offices determined those criteria.

Max also asked if intergovernmental groups counted toward diversity metrics, noting that the burden of meeting those goals seemed to be placed on the interest groups. Kelly stated that diversity was determined from the Board as a whole. DOE only had the power to influence that for interest groups and Public at Large but encouraged everyone to think about appointments from a diversity standpoint. Max asked of the metrics were measured by the makeup of the organization or the specific people sitting in each seat. As an example, would the diversity of his seat be determined by Max as the individual, or the demographics of the State of Oregon? Alternately, would the tribes be considered to have a seat that represented a tribal interest if their representative was not a citizen of that tribal nation? Kelly stated that DOE considered both. In Max's second example, were the tribal representative identified as a tribal member, and that was marked on the application, that the representative would also count towards ethnicity demographics. DOE tied to look at things from a variety of viewpoints and remain as inclusive as possible. Max asked if the executive order previously referenced or another document contained DOE's target metrics. Kelly stated that she would provide Max with the appropriate document.



Steve Wiegman recalled Kelly's statements about how the HAB could operate going forward, noting in particular that she stated that members of the public could participate in HAB committees. He felt that would be a dramatic evolution as to how the Board operated and hoped to understand more about that, as it would be an option for retaining institutional knowledge.

Carrie clarified the statement, noting that it was not intended to say that members of the public could be official members of a committee, but just that they could participate on a committee. In a full Board meeting, the public is restricted to commenting during public comment periods, whereas in a committee meeting the public was able to have active back-and-forth dialogue and weigh in on advice being developed. Kelly concurred. She noted that the majority of the committee would need to consist of Board members; there could not be more members of the public than there were members of the Board. The members of the public could have discussions and work on recommendations, but members of the public could not vote and could not be part of any official proceedings.

Steve noted that would be a dramatic difference in Board operations, no matter how it was managed. He asked if there was something written that described those rules, in context, for a board like the HAB. Kelly stated that it would be in the Board's bylaws and procedures. If those were not in place, the HAB might need to work with DOE site staff to develop those. Steve asked that member consider the opportunity as it was an option for retaining knowledge.

Tom Sicilia, Oregon Department of Energy, stated that he heard the call for diversity, but without being provided metrics work toward, DOE was saying "bring me a rock." He stated that the HAB was a regional board of interests, and as a result, looking a census date for an area such as the Pasco Basin was arbitrary. Kelly stated that DOE did have an identified list of goals that it was trying to achieve, and it was not just moving forward without a plan. Carrie explained that, for the previous year, DOE went through census data for the surrounding communities, recognizing that that was not regional, and learned that those communities consisted of a 54% Caucasian, 39% Hispanic, 3% Native American, 2% African American, and 2% other population. Within that, 53% were male and 47% were female. For education, 25% of that population held high school diplomas, 15.6% has bachelor's degrees, 10% had master's degrees or higher, and the rest was categorized as "other." Tom Sicilia appreciated those statistics and thought it would be good to see those goals in writing.

Carrie stated that those were just the basic numbers and wanted to continue that discussion with the Board. DOE hoped to have specific goals, rather than just throwing numbers out there. She noted that there were other considerations, such as how far out data would be gathered. Tom Sicilia suggested scheduling a standing Committee of the Whole (COTW) to serve as a collaborative space for that discussion. He noted that the MOU discussed Public at Large as making up for diversity where it was necessary and wondered if adding more of those seats was necessary. Carrie stated that DOE was not intending to add more Public at Large seats and that the previous instance of that was done as a stop gap measure. Though it helped to an extent, the Board was still out of alignment with the requirements and potentially prevented other people that would like to serve on the Board from doing so. An important aspect of all FACA boards was to provide an opportunity for the next generation to participate.

Richard Bloom, City of West Richland, stated that, as an elected official, the Board was just one of many collateral duties he had. He wondered, as experienced members drop off and new members were selected, how long would it be before they became "real members" of the Board. Also, regarding attempts to keep the younger population engaged, Richard noted that Hanford was extremely complicated situation and took a long time to learn. Even for those with extensive experience working at Hanford, it can take a long time to learn and become accustomed to Board operations.

With those considerations, he felt that the six-year term limit imposed an extra burden on Board members due to the time it would take to bring a new member up to speed and feeling comfortable. He stated that trying to get someone to speak up at City Council meetings was nearly impossible, especially in a virtual environment. The City of Richland had those struggles, even with evening meetings. He felt that DOE was adding another layer of effort that was setting the Board up for failure. He asked how long they should expect it to take for new Board members to become functional members of the Board.

Kelly agreed that new members would require a long time to be brought up to speed, perhaps in the range of two to three years, depending on the topic. She stated that the six-year limit was a longstanding decision, but in her experience across other SSABs members would serve their whole terms, making the time and support necessary to become educated worthwhile. She stated that something that DOE wanted to do for all boards was ensure that those members had a solid foundation in terms of orientation and support from staff so they could be as trained as needed. She agreed that in regard to timing, it was an issue that it took so long for people to get ready to participate.

Richard suggested, as a means to expand diversity, would be to encourage current members to reach out and bring students into the subcommittee meetings to participate, serving as education on Hanford and the Board. He felt that having the time to invest was the key to a successful board. Kelly stated that DOE recognized the time and effort members contribute and did not want that to stop, but DOE also did not want to prevent new people from participating just because there was never an open seat. Though, if there was not an application, DOE did not want to remove existing members.

Shannon Cram, University of Washington (UW), thanked Kelly for her work in expediting the membership approval process. She stated that she would love to hear, perhaps another time, a plan to understand Board processes and to build relationships for members joining the Board. She stated that relationships were something that kept her coming back, noting that she was one of the younger members of the Board. As a teacher, she was required to cancel her classes to join Board meetings. As other means of increasing diversity, HAB members might need to be provided a level of structural support, such as parenting help, day care, or other significant things that make it possible for young, working members to attend.

Shannon was appreciated the efforts to bring different groups into the HAB and reiterated that relationship building was an important thing for prospective new members, as it assisted with learning Board processes as well as building an understanding between members. Relationships mattered in regard to advancing Board business too, as it helped in “getting a pulse of the consensus,” based on her experience with past advice. She posed a specific question. For regional universities, the UW was just one of many, and she had her seat as a UW representative for greater than six years. She asked: when her current term was over, would UW lose its seat as well? Who determined that?

Shannon also noted that she previously talked to the UW nominating authority about getting a graduate student on the Board and was told that they were not allowed to serve. It was understood that only allowed faculty and staff to be on the Board. If that were the case, it may be something to consider, as it would impact age diversity on the Board.

Gerry Pollet, Heart of America Northwest, stated that DOE’s assertion that the local government representatives would not have responsibility in meeting diversity groups, as opposed to interest groups, reflected a shocking lack of understanding for the history of the region. He recalled details of the history of segregation in the communities surrounding Hanford and stated that the apparent lack of understanding, as well as the way DOE was going about was shameful.

He stated that the Board was created as a representational board, though DOE was telling the regional environmental groups that they could not choose who spoke for them or their thousands of members, despite local governments and labor unions were being granted that right. That right was why the Board was created as a representational Board. He stated that, if DOE wanted to increase diversity, DOE should first look at its own failure to reach out the community of Mattawa, the community just north of the Hanford Site boundary and within the taxing district of Hanford, with a 95% Latino community. Gerry stated that he was working with the Port of Mattawa, its city officials, and its school district to increase its relationships with Hanford, along with Ecology staff. He suggested that, if DOE wanted to increase diversity, it should start by looking by looking at the history of the site and who was represented, rather than throwing out the concept of a representational board.

Additionally, Gerry pointed out that organizations such as Heart of America Northwest previously had college or graduate students as an alternate and were unable to continue doing so because DOE unilaterally stated that they would only support one person travelling for regional organizations. Furthermore, when the organization tried to appoint an alternate, it often took so long for DOE to appoint them that those students graduated from law school or schools of public health. Where those students went to work in the Hanford area, they were unable to participate on the Board because they were unable to get that time off work. Gerry stated that other boards that he works with in the region or nationwide have a commitment to equity by providing a stipend and paying for travel.

Gerry suggested that, if DOE wants the Board to be able to participate and to increase diversity that it should follow what EPA does for other regional Superfund site advisory boards, along with other agencies, and pay for the travel and a stipend, or reimburse the representative organizations for the small stipend that makes participation possible. He stated that, instead, the burden of the cost of diversity and travel was placed entirely on the regional environmental groups and universities, excluding local governments and business organizations from that responsibility.

He stated that there were things that DOE could do to increase participation easily, but it would need to make a commitment. He stated that anyone in government knows, to commit to diversity, it needs to spend a little money, but DOE did not. Instead, while stating that it would commit to diversity, DOE gutted the Board's budget and prevented the Board from being able to pursue its own diversity efforts. He noted that within his organization, one of their youngest members was a former Spokane City Council member. His organization was the only one on the Board with representation from Spokane, the largest downwind city from Hanford, and a diverse city with great interest in the site. However, he stated, DOE did not reach out and try to add someone from the City of Spokane.

He stated that, if DOE wanted to increase diversity, it should commit to a representational board and honor that commitment. Second, DOE should give the Board the resources to meet the goals for increasing diversity. And third, DOE should increase seats on the Board to recognize that the original makeup of the Board might have biases or oversight in not including some of the most impacted and difficult to represent populations in the region, such as Mattawa or Spokane. Otherwise, Gerry suggested that alternative of asking the State of Washington to go back to having a state advisory board for Hanford. He stated that there was no reason they should not do that and could likely do it better. He, offered to talk with DOE further about the suggestions, if desired.

Shelley Cimon, Columbia Riverkeeper, stated that she really hoped to be able to continue the conversation with Carrie and Kelly after being able to look at the numbers. As she saw it, it seemed that the among the 15 MOU-named organizations, there were 30 seats that could potentially all fill one demographic area, impacting the ability for DOE to meet its quotas. Furthermore, she did not hear any

“nod” to the importance of institutional knowledge, or how important that knowledge was to the Hanford Site in particular. Knowledge of the history of the site and how to utilize that knowledge going forward was especially important, as eventually the Hanford Site would be all by itself “duking it out” in Washington DC for funding, being the last remaining cleanup site in the complex. It seemed most important to her to retain that institutional knowledge and to build a robust board to carry that knowledge forward to work as a community. Hanford would need vessels such as the HAB to lobby for the money that would be needed going forward.

Shelley felt that the seeming lack of value placed on institutional knowledge was a tremendous oversight and something that needed to be discussed further. She also wanted a better understanding of how DOE planned to implement its proposal, as it felt like a piecemeal approach with the potential to create a domino effect. She wanted to see the process utilized and decision matrices that would be on paper to study. With the information provided during this meeting, Shelley had more questions than she expected could be answered and hoped seeing the details written would assist in her understanding.

Kelley stated that a lot of aspects to the proposal would be locally decided. She expected that the HAB would be working on its internal processes for nominations and getting applicants from multiple organizations. She stated that the local DOE office had been thinking about that as well, but it was not a type of procedure that DOE-HQ would be dictating or taking responsibility for. This was something that would be worked on at the local level with the Board, along with other various people involved in the TPA. The next package that the Board submitted to DOE would be required to align with DOE’s guidance, as DOE was directed to implement the executive order immediately. Other boards were already directed to do the same.

Carrie reminded the Board that the day’s meeting was intended to just be the start of a conversation on the matter. She hoped to continue to discuss the goals DOE set with the Board going forward. She heard and understood concerns over the impacts to the 12 interest seats, which would need to be considered. She intended to work with Gary Younger, DOE, to get a process flowchart that could be shared with the Board. She intended to have a follow-up conversation within the next month.

Shelley noted that she was among the “longest-lived” members of the Board, having been involved in it since its inception and was interviewed for the convening report. She considered that it may be time for her to step back, however, she also understood that the Board could not “pull informed advice out of thin air.” It took the technical expertise and historical knowledge of its committees and Board members to help them understand the issues to the best of their ability. What the Board needs to weigh in on when it brings advice to a policy level is determined through the committee and Board processes. Many members that are not trained as geologists, hydrologists, engineers, or other technical professionals depend on and listen to those members to think about what is important policy-wise in discussions of remediation and disposition of Hanford Site materials. She felt it was very important to retain that knowledge to help the Board sort through information and ultimately provide informed advice. She wanted that to be considered.

Marissa Merker, Nez Perce Tribe, stated that she had several comments. First, she noted that Kelly mentioned working with university fraternities and sororities, which were notorious for lacking diversity. She pointed out that there were a lot of university and college groups that might be very interested in the Board’s activities, such as Native American, Chicano, Latino, and other groups. Additionally, there are those with studies in the areas of water quality or environmental engineering that engage in environmental justice out of passion rather than requirement. Second, she noted that Carrie mentioned that DOE wanted to limit the technical discussion on that HAB, however, the public was expected to read hundreds or thousands of pages of technical documents that the DOE put out. She wondered how they were expected

to separate the two when HAB members and the public are consistently asked to comment on documents such as a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS), which are entirely technical. Finally, she stated that, speaking for her department, it seemed that DOE was trying to direct the HAB's discussion and in the three years that she has been on the HAB they have felt more ostracized. She hoped her comments would be considered when DOE considered diversity.

Esteban Ortiz, Green Latinos, stated that, as a Mexican American that is new to the area, that DOE did not recognize the native lands it was on. Second, to the "gentleman from Pasco," he heard the argument in relation to technical content that "white folks are superior in intelligence to diverse folks." As someone that has worked for diverse, non-profit organizations and as a military veteran, he was insulted by the comments he heard from that individual. He had been told that he was of an inferior race because of the color of his skin or his culture. He felt that was sickening to hear, particularly from a federal agency. It was an insult to the extent that he did not want to serve on the Board any longer. He felt that they only wanted to hear from scientists, who he stated were among the most racist people, from his experience working with them and from living in Richland. Additionally, he stated that there was a lack of diversity within Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) and any federal agency, including DOE and EPA.

He asked that DOE recognize the land it was on and recognize that there has been no outreach done to Spanish-speaking communities in the area, as those communities were aware of the site, but should not be expected to speak up about the matter. Regarding technical discussions, he stated that they "might as well say there's an inferior race out there."

For clarification, Carrie asked Esteban if someone on either the Board or with one of the TPA agencies said or did something to make him feel inferior. Esteban said it he was referring to the Pasco representative's statements that the Board needed technical know-how to serve on the Board. He stated that was not necessary, as people can read. Further, he has done outreach with non-profits at the Pasco flea market where he has learned that people are aware of the Hanford Site but have jobs. However, by making the argument that one needs technical know-how to serve on the Board, one "might as well be saying that there is a superior race." That was the argument that he has heard, especially from scientists, that he has had to challenge in the non-profits he has worked for, particularly science non-profits.

Carrie hoped to clarify her earlier statements. The HAB was not a technical advisory board, and the general public was well qualified to understand how DOE did its work and the technologies it employed. It was on them—DOE and its contractors, as well as EPA and Ecology—to make sure that they were providing the right level of briefing to allow the Board members to be informed in crafting its advice. That is a question that DOE has struggled with: how much technical detail is necessary to do that? She was in a quandary, as it felt that DOE was consistently being lambasted for not providing enough technical detail, however, as she has share with the Board on several occasions, the local entities felt discouraged by feeling that the Board or its members often want to go down "rabbit trails" that are not relevant to what needs to be done to achieve cleanup. They want to get too technical or get focused on their own perspectives to the extent that they inhibit others. That's why she wanted Esteban to be frank on the matter: she has not heard many speak up about it publicly about the matter. Instead, she typically hears the concerns in private, with statements about not being able to bring it up to the Board for fear of being "crucified" by those that do not agree.

Kelly pointed out that on the membership application that every Board member is asked to fill out there is a statement that no degree, certification, or technical background is required for Board membership and that members with different educational background all contribute to a diversity of opinions and

experiences. She wanted to be clear that DOE liked to have membership with diverse backgrounds so that it can hear a variety of viewpoints.

Stan Branch agreed with Carrie and Kelly's statements. DOE wanted to ensure that the Board was diverse per the demographic region wide. The Board was not for technical staff only, and DOE wanted to provide information that could be understood at diverse technical levels.

Gary Younger referred to Esteban's statement about Hispanic community outreach. DOE has recognized that was an area of deficiency and was working to do better going forward. That was one of the reasons it had specific goals of Hispanic representation in the previous membership packet. Additionally, DOE recognized that it could do better at sending out information. That was why DOE has been also putting out their news releases and similar things in Spanish. DOE understood that it was not perfect in Hispanic outreach but was working to improve. Gary stated that it was people like Esteban wanting to be part of the solution that DOE would have the help to get further along in that effort.

Liz Mattson, Hanford Challenge, noted that she appreciated Esteban serving on the Board and his contributions. She hoped he did not leave the Board but respected his decision either way. Regarding the membership packet topic, she felt that there needed to be further discussion on the matter. There was a lot of information relayed in this meeting, and the Board needed time to process the information and think through it. Additionally, she expected that it would be difficult to assemble a new membership package with that information in the month remaining before submittal.

With the information presented as it was, knowing that there was conflict between the Board and DOE, she felt that it was presented as "cleaning out" a lot of active members from the Board, though she believed the goal to be of noble intent. She stated that it was a good thing to bring additional racial, ethnic, gender, and age diversity to the Board, but it needed to be done in a thoughtful way. It also needed to be done in a way that looked at the entire picture of public involvement at Hanford and not just the HAB. That was something the HAB had been asking for a long time: meaningful, regional public engagement. She did not trust that DOE's proposal would solve any problems and seemed to just be a means to check the box, rather than being a longer, more thought-out process that was really involving the Board.

She appreciated that Carrie initiated this meeting to talk with the Board about the matter rather than just issuing a memo but felt that there were some more steps necessary to figure out the implications for those groups identified as special interest groups. She saw each seat on the Board as representing an interest, so DOE's interpretation and implementation of the executive order seemed frustrating. She agreed that there needed to be additional diversity brought to the Board and that the Board should evolve over the long span of time it would be required.

Liz was unclear about who the nominating authorities for special interest groups would be or the process behind that. For example, Hanford Challenge already had plans for who it would nominate for its seat but was unsure what would happen if it was decided that Hanford Challenge was no longer wanted on the Board. She asked for additional information on that.

Carrie stated that the intent was to cast a "wide net" every year to see what response was received. She stated that DOE has been trying to do that for a number of years, and continually identifying areas where the Board lacked to focus on organizations, entities, or agencies that have the demographics that the Board needs. When DOE got nominations, it would review those with the other TPA agencies. That was how it has worked for years and how it was seen as continuing.

Dan Strom, Benton Franklin Health District, stated that he hoped Esteban found a way to stay on the Board. He had suggestions for the recruitment and nomination process based upon his own experience joining the Board. When he was appointed, his email came from an individual he was unfamiliar with and has no previous interaction at DOE-HQ, and as a result, his email was marked as spam. He did not learn of his nomination until the December 2020 full Board meeting. He asked that, in the future, DOE send its emails with a receipt request or have the announcement come from someone that the applicant is familiar with. Carrie stated that she would also suggest a phone call in the future. She apologized for not following up sooner.

Chris Sutton, Public at Large, considered the need for the HAB to form a committee focused on mentorship. That committee could serve as a means to pass on technical and institutional knowledge, assist new members, and help those that are hesitant to ask questions. He felt that it would be helpful for new members to have a list of names that they could go to for help. Carrie stated that it was a good idea that could be discussed going forward.

Liz noted that part of passing on institutional knowledge was taking the time to build community and mentorships, which was something that the HAB had been working toward for a while. However, there was a requirement there for established Board members to reach out to new members. In her case, she has been working with a prospective member of the HAB so that individual will be ready to “hit the ground running” when appointed.

Marissa, as a response to Esteban’s earlier statements, noted that she was a scientist with the Nez Perce Tribe. She wanted to make sure that, when she was discussing technical information that she came across as understandable to everybody. She hoped that she could get feedback on that. Additionally, she introduced Kristie Baptiste-Eke as Nez Perce Tribe policy analyst.

Steve Anderson, Grant and Franklin Counties, wanted to apologize as an old white male. He thought that the caste system in the country was appalling and that they could do better.

Liz asked to hear reflections from the regulators after hearing the day’s discussions.

David Bowen stated that he thought that many of the day’s comments reflected his own concerns that he expressed earlier in the meeting. Regarding Esteban’s comments, he stated that, as a white male, he worked hard to get where he was, but did not face the same hurdles others might have. Regarding the meeting topic, he needed to take what he heard in the meeting back to his team. He noted that he has been talking with DOE about various related topics since approximately November, off and on. He was pleased that there would be a mechanism for exemptions. He liked the suggestion of mentorships, noting that he was working on a similar thing at Ecology. He hoped that he would be able to set a good path forward for the successor to his own position.

Dave Einan stated that he agreed with much of what David Bowen said. He felt that there was a lot of things that came up in the meeting that needed time for consideration. He thought that a lot of the points and concerns brought up were worthwhile. He thought that diversity in all areas was needed, including diversity of thought and experience, along with “things that are easy to check a box on.” He felt that everyone did better when hearing from all voices. It was a tough conversation to have but an important one to have. He felt that members were too busy to take the time “checking the boxes.”

Phil Lemley, Benton-Franklin Council of Governments, stated that he thought it was important to have a good mix of technical expertise and complete novices. He felt that the saying about no dumb questions was applicable to this situation: often times, novices will ask questions that get everyone thinking deeper on a subject, often resulting in the subject being explained better.

## **Board Business**

Tom Galieto stated that Board needed to resume scheduling committee reports for everything meeting. He stated that those needed to be an agenda item at every full Board meeting, as the Board lost a lot by not having those committee reports. It was the only connection many members have with what goes on with the Board.

Gary Younger stated that one of the things being discussed at DOE was the desire for budget advice in the near future, noting that the Budgets and Contracts Committee (BCC) typically assists with that. He wanted to get that Issue Manager (IM) team “sanctioned.” Ruth Nicholson stated that was an agenda topic for the next Executive Issues Committee (EIC) agenda.

## **Closing**

Steve Wiegman wanted to comment on Esteban’s concerns. He stated that Esteban’s concerns were heard. He thought that the institutional knowledge that some members brought could also bring a bit of arrogance and self-realization when given the opportunity to speak, resulting in overwhelming of other people’s opportunity to speak. He challenged those with a sense of long-term institutional knowledge to be a little bit quitter and listen a lot more. He thought that Esteban could be a good barometer of the HAB’s success in that matter and hoped for Esteban to stay with the Board. Steve respected what Esteban was saying and asked everyone to do the same.

Steve stated that everyone was interested in what would happen next. The HAB was a dynamic board in a dynamic time, so it needed to mature itself to survive all the challenges that will come to it in the future. One of the most important things that the Board members needed to do was listen to each other, respect each other, and realize that the Board represents such diverse views that it was difficult to get consensus. Consensus was difficult to reach due to the many perspectives represented, some of which were not heard due to some members being overwhelmed. As a result, the HAB needed to focus on inclusion and integrity in the way it operates. He hoped to work with DOE on the next membership package in a way that encourages people to participate in the process.

Stan Branch wanted to address a previous comment regarding acknowledging land involving tribal members. He stated that the DOE recognized that tribes and their treaty rights and had specific programs in place to engage and consult with those tribes. The HAB was not that mechanism for that, nor was it intended to raise one group or community above another. Instead, it was intended to allow the community to share its views, perspectives, and opinions.

Carrie Meyer thanked everyone for participating in the meeting.

## **Meeting Recording**

<https://youtu.be/5rmL4ySnnHE>

## **Attachments**

[Attachment 1: Meeting Agenda](#)

[Attachment 2: DOE Board Membership Updates](#)



## Attendees

### **Board Members and Alternates:**

Becky Holland, Primary	Bob Suyama, Primary	Dan Solitz, Primary
Denise Jones, Primary	Emmitt Jackson, Primary	Esteban Ortiz, Primary
Gerry Pollet, Primary	Jacob Reynolds, Primary	Jan Catrell, Primary
Laurene Contreras, Primary	LoAnn Ayers, Primary	Max Woods, Primary
Phil Lemley, Primary	Richard Bloom, Primary	Rob Davis, Primary
Shannon Cram, Primary	Shelley Cimon, Primary	Steve Anderson, Primary
Steve Wiegman, Primary	Susan Coleman, Primary	Tom Galioto, Primary
Tony Brooks, Primary	Chris Sutton, Alternate	Dan Strom, Alternate
David Reeploeg, Alternate	Jeff Burright, Alternate	Larry Halder, Alternate
Liz Mattson, Alternate	Marissa Merker, Alternate	Michael Korenko, Alternate
Simone Anter, Alternate	Steven Rowley, Alternate	Susan Leckband, Alternate
Todd Martin, Alternate	Tom Sicilia, Alternate	Vince Panesko, Alternate

### **Others:**

Carrie Meyer, DOE	Dan McDonald, Ecology	Abigail Zilar, GSSC for DOE
Donovan Robinson, DOE	David Bowen, Ecology	Dieter Bohrman, CPCCo
Gary Younger, DOE	Edward Holbrook, Ecology	Amber Peters, HMIS
Geoff Tyree, DOE	Ginger Wireman, Ecology	Cerise Peck, HMIS
Kelly Snyder, DOE	John Price, Ecology	Coleen Drinkard, HMIS
Laura Caulfield, DOE	Ryan Miller, Ecology	Dana Cowley, HMIS
Paul Noel, DOE	Stephanie Schleif, Ecology	Debbie Kelley, HMIS
Richard Buel, DOE	Dave Einan, EPA	Jen Colborn, HMIS
Scott Stover, DOE	Geoff Schramm, EPA	Patrick Conrad, HMIS
Stan Branch, DOE	Roberto Armijo, EPA	Destry Henderson, WRPS
	Tom Rogers, Washington State Department of Health	Therese Meyer, WRPS
		Miya Burke, Hanford Challenge
		Li Wang, YN ERWM
		Jodi Christiansen, RCECM

		Kate Moran
		KB
		Tracy Barker, AvanTECH
		Annette Cary, Tri-City Herald
		Josh Patnaude, HAB Facilitation
		Olivia Wilcox, HAB Facilitation
		Ruth Nicholson, HAB Facilitation

Note: Participants for this virtual meeting were asked to sign in with their name and affiliation in the chat box of Microsoft Teams. Not all attendees shared this information. The attendance list reflects what information was collected at the meeting.